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**Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**
**Sixty-first session**

**Summary record of the 19th meeting**
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 2 June 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. Bras Gomes

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Consideration of reports

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*Sixth periodic report of the Netherlands* (*continued*)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports**

**(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant** (*continued*)

*Sixth periodic report of the Netherlands* (*continued*) (E/C.12/NLD/6, E/C.12/NLD/Q/6 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Netherlands took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Kedzia** (Task Force Member) said that he would appreciate it if the delegation focused its replies more on the perspective of the individual as a rights holder. For example, the fact that the Labour Inspectorate had a double mandate might not be a problem from an institutional point of view, but it could hinder people's ability to seek remedy for rights violations. There had been a similar lack of attention to the individual in the replies regarding domestic workers. He wished to know whether the State party intended to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). He also wished to know what the status and objectives of the action plan on pregnancy discrimination were and how the individual in her capacity as a rights holder was incorporated in the document.

3. **Ms. Mulder** (Netherlands) said that the Government applied the Covenant in two ways: firstly, since it viewed all the provisions as binding, the Government used the Integral Assessment Framework, which contained specific guidance on economic, social and cultural rights, when formulating laws and policies. Secondly, the Constitution provided for the direct application of treaty provisions by individuals when, in the view of the judiciary, their wording was sufficiently precise. The implementation of Covenant rights was often the result of a political process that was difficult to reconcile with judicial decisions on individual cases that might have an impact on a wider group. The Government would nonetheless assess the guidelines on economic, social and cultural rights in the light of the Committee's concern.

4. According to government and non-governmental organization (NGO) estimates, at least 100,000 people resided unlawfully in the Netherlands. In the past, owing to the accession of new members to the European Union, citizens of those countries had been temporarily prohibited from working without a permit. However, the permit requirement had been lifted in 2014 and the parliament had looked into ways of mitigating the adverse effects of legal and illegal labour migration, such as poor housing, low pay and exploitation. Most recent legislative action had been focused on enhancing protection for workers, regardless of their origin. Economic incentives for employers remained high in order to offset a tendency, brought on by the influx of migrant workers due to a sound economy and a comparatively high minimum wage, of paying below the minimum wage. The Labour Inspectorate had seen a clear rise in complaints of underpayment, both in real terms and as a share of overall complaints. As a consequence, it had broadened its scope of action and now conducted more in-depth audits. Nearly 3,000 inspections had been carried out in 2016, leading to the detection of over 1,000 illegal workers, and the number of penalties, whether fines, warnings or temporary shutdowns, had been almost double the number imposed under the former working method. According to recent reports by the European Police Office (Europol) and the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children, the risk of labour exploitation was on the rise, as demonstrated by certain practices in the transportation sector, and could be successfully addressed only if the various inspectorates worked in unison. Information on the Labour Inspectorate's dual mandate would be provided in writing once an English translation of the new control framework was available.

5. **Ms. Eijwachter** (Netherlands) said that, by law, part-time domestic workers should receive at least the minimum wage and were entitled to paid annual leave, six weeks' paid sick leave and the State old-age pension. Regarding the non-ratification of ILO Convention No. 189, it should be noted that recognizing equal rights for part-time domestic

workers would not improve their situation unless large wage subsidies were also introduced. However, such subsidies were susceptible to abuse and would require the addition of certified intermediaries, which would increase the cost of the subsidy scheme without creating any extra jobs. Accordingly, the Government had chosen to keep existing safeguards in place and leave part-time domestic work entirely in the sphere of the informal economy. That said, the relatively high minimum labour cost constrained the demand for uneducated workers in general; therefore, a wage cost subsidy had been introduced in 2017 to boost demand for minimum-wage workers, including domestic help, although it would not suffice to regularize most of the market for domestic work.

6. **Mr. Staats** (Netherlands) said that a number of initiatives related to supply chain issues were under way, including: a corporate social responsibility covenant being developed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, social partners and NGOs; a bill on child labour in supply chains that was currently before the Senate and contained a due diligence obligation for firms; a corporate human rights benchmark that set a new standard in the business sector; and funding for ILO research on global supply chains.

7. **Ms. Hoesein** (Netherlands) said that recent changes to social benefits were in line with the Covenant and were designed to provide an adequate safety net and promote financial independence by supporting job seekers. Moreover, they had led to an increase in purchasing power. The level of social benefits was adequate and was adjusted to the situation of the household. Some individuals could be eligible for further benefits, such as tax exemptions, housing allowances and medical benefits, many of which had been increased. Where personal circumstances meant that government measures were not enough to provide an adequate standard of living, individuals could receive special municipal assistance. Municipalities were allocated a budget for the provision of general social benefits and assistance to job seekers and received €90 million per year to tackle poverty and household debt. They were not permitted to cut social benefits because of budget constraints.

8. The Participation Act established that persons under the age of 27 years who applied for social assistance were expected to actively seek employment for a period of four weeks before receiving benefits. However, vulnerable young people who were unable to seek employment or gain a foothold in the labour market could receive special municipal support during that period. Such individualized support was compulsory for certain categories of people, such as persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the Act provided for the payment of an advance, pending a final decision on eligibility for social benefits. In principle, minors could not claim social security benefits independently of their parents, but the Government was of the view that children should never be the victims of their family's financial situation. Thus, undocumented parents could apply for a residence permit on the grounds that they had to care for their children. In addition, municipal assistance was available for children with no other means of support. Families with minor children who did not have legal status in the Netherlands were placed in family centres, where they had guaranteed access to food, shelter, clothing and education.

9. **Ms. Weiland** (Netherlands) said that it was not clear why membership of trade unions was falling, only that it was a general trend in many countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Dutch policies in that field remained unchanged. The Government valued social dialogue highly and had also facilitated union membership by making union dues tax-deductible.

10. **Mr. Abou** (Netherlands) said that, by law, all Dutch citizens had access to shelter in the location of their choice. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport had commissioned regular studies of municipal shelter services, which were provided free of charge. In 2015, a special commission had issued guidance on how housing and community shelter services could best be organized, which the municipalities had endorsed. Regional action plans were being developed to prevent homelessness, provide good quality shelter services and help individuals return to independent living. In addition, the Government was working to increase affordable housing and prevent people from being evicted because of an inability to pay rent. The number of evictions was declining.

11. **Ms. Weiland** (Netherlands) said that the Government, in consultation with the National Institute for Human Rights, was exploring ways of further combating pregnancy discrimination. In that connection, two round tables had been held with social partners and other stakeholders since September 2016, following which the Government had recently put forward the Action Plan on Pregnancy Discrimination, which contained 13 new measures on enforcement, awareness and reporting of cases. A progress report on the Action Plan was scheduled for early 2018.

12. **Ms. Croes** (Netherlands) said that the Department of Social Affairs in Aruba provided psychological counselling to victims of abuse and had registered nearly 300 new cases in 2015. It also provided a shelter employing two social workers. The poverty line was set at 60 per cent of the mean personal income. Persons who could not enter the labour market, such as older persons and persons with disabilities, were eligible for additional services, while persons who could aspire to the labour market benefited from skills upgrading and other empowerment measures. The monthly welfare benefit had increased in 2017 and parents on welfare received a tuition subsidy for their children. The various poverty alleviation programmes administered by the Department cost 42 million Aruban florins per year.

13. **Ms. Martis** (Netherlands) said that the Government of Curaçao had taken significant steps to modernize its oil refinery in an effort to resolve the pollution problem and meet the highest international environmental standards. In that connection, a memorandum of understanding had been signed with a Chinese firm, which would finance an upgrade and then rent the facilities for 40 years. It was a major project that would see the refinery shift to natural gas and would employ 4,500 people for three to five years.

14. **Ms. Yearwood** (Netherlands) said that the Government of Curaçao provided needy families with subsidies for utilities and housing, as well as free primary and secondary education, school uniforms, transportation and school meals for children living below the poverty line. Some 4,000 families received a monthly basic needs subsidy to help them achieve a decent standard of living.

15. **Ms. Voges** (Netherlands) said that Sint Maarten had shared the decision of the European Netherlands to withdraw the reservation to article 8 (1) (d) on the right to strike. However, the reservation could be withdrawn only once the relevant amendments to the Criminal Code had been adopted.

16. Abortion remained illegal in Sint Maarten, but there were strong calls to review the law. On 7 July 2017, the Government would host a conference to discuss topics including medical termination of pregnancy, the age of parental consent for contraception, access to sexual and reproductive health services, the introduction of comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education in schools and the social inclusion of sexual minorities. It would also present draft amendments to the law regarding the legalization of abortion.

17. The Civil Code had been amended in 2011 with the adoption of an ordinance on parental responsibility, whereby corporal punishment and any other form of abuse or mental or physical violence against children was punishable by law. In addition, a central registration and referral centre for child abuse cases had been established in 2014, the Guardianship Court had introduced an automatic registration and file-tracking system in child abuse cases in November 2014 and a 24-hour child abuse hotline had been set up in 2015. A national protocol had been approved in 2015, paving the way for a bill on mandatory reporting of abuse planned for 2017.

18. The Government-funded NGO Safe Haven, which was the focal point for reporting domestic violence, provided free shelter, counselling and support services to women victims and their children. It had established partnerships with medical centres, the police, immigration, child welfare and victim services, the Department of Labour, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organizations, and schools to raise awareness and develop programmes and services for victims of intimate partner violence and trauma. The Government, in cooperation with NGOs, held training sessions on domestic violence for the police and other agencies, most recently in March 2017. The Government continued to fund

public campaigns to educate victims about their rights and thereby reduce ongoing stigma and encourage the reporting of cases.

19. A national development plan was currently being designed by multiple agencies, but setbacks had made it necessary to conduct additional research. In that connection, the Department of Statistics was validating the results of a study and official results were expected in the course of 2017. A report highlighting the areas that presented the most challenges would be prepared with a view to adjusting the methodology. The Government continued to provide unemployment and social benefits and strove to alleviate poverty through improved employment opportunities.

20. **Mr. Abou** (Netherlands) said that municipalities were required by law to provide services to victims of domestic violence. Safe at Home, a nationwide network of women's shelters, provided victims with immediate accommodation, protection and assistance. There was also a small number of safe houses with secret addresses for victims under constant and serious threat. Each region had its own social care system that included, inter alia, the possibility of domestic exclusion orders and support for victims and their children, and also for perpetrators. The Social Support Act set a basic quality standard for social services, which it was the municipalities' responsibility to monitor. However, in the event of an incident, the Government could step in. In an effort to avoid waiting lists for shelter spaces, municipalities had invested in the Safe at Home network; and, as at April 2017, three quarters of shelters had no waiting list.

21. The decentralization of youth services had allowed local authorities to adopt an integrated approach to child abuse and partner violence. All reports of child abuse and domestic violence, including suspected cases, were now referred to Safe at Home. Because child abuse and domestic violence were no longer treated as separate issues, it was possible to give families more effective assistance. Various advances were planned, namely the development of a national support programme, the adoption of a five-year service improvement plan and the strengthening of the reporting rules so that Safe at Home was notified of serious cases. In addition, in order to improve the prevention and detection of child abuse, a so-called child check had been rolled out, whereby health-care professionals treating persons with specific health issues were recommended to ask whether there were any children in the household.

22. Although there were no reliable data on the prevalence of violations of children's rights and domestic violence in the Caribbean Netherlands, owing to the reluctance to report cases, two major reports in 2013 and 2014 had shown that the two problems were common. The European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands were working on an agreement to strengthen the policy against domestic violence that would focus on prevention, skills building for professionals, stronger support and assistance systems, safer shelters and an accessible reporting structure.

23. **Ms. Eijnwachter** (Netherlands) said that there were four types of leave arrangements to support a work-life balance for parents and carers. Women were entitled to 16 weeks' fully paid maternity leave, while fathers received 2 days' paid paternity leave plus an additional 3 unpaid days to be taken within 4 weeks of the birth. A bill to extend paid paternity leave by a further 3 days was pending adoption. Both parents were eligible for parental leave: for each child, they were entitled to a period of leave amounting to 26 times their weekly working hours, to be taken before the child's eighth birthday. While that type of leave was unpaid, many collective bargaining agreements contained provisions for partial pay. Lastly, employees were entitled to take off a period annually, amounting to two times their weekly working hours, at 70 per cent pay, to care for ill household members, relatives or people in their social environment. They could also take six times their weekly working hours in unpaid care leave.

24. **Ms. Hussein** (Netherlands) said that the Government had prioritized the reduction of poverty, which had risen in the aftermath of the financial crisis, and was therefore taking a two-pronged approach that consisted in providing protection and boosting employment. Its efforts were pushing the poverty rate back down, but the same could not yet be said of long-term poverty. The Government was of the view that work was the best way of overcoming poverty; accordingly, employment policies focused on preventing job loss,

stimulating job creation and supporting vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, in their job search. In addition, municipalities received funding to implement poverty reduction policies that were developed in consultation with stakeholders and centred around the individual, prevention and after-service measures.

25. **Mr. Bette** (Netherlands) said that child benefit had been introduced in the Caribbean Netherlands in January 2016 and the scope of other special assistance measures had been broadened; applications for such assistance had risen considerably. The statutory minimum wage and funding for poverty reduction had been increased. The sums paid in social assistance benefits had also been increased, although they still did not necessarily come up to subsistence levels. Therefore, a social minimum was being calculated on the basis of an independent cost-of-living survey, taking into account factors such as training and how the labour market functioned. A socioeconomic agenda should be finalized in mid-2017.

26. **Ms. Racamy** (Netherlands) said that the poverty line in Curaçao was set at US$ 800 a month for one adult and one child. Given that the authorities referred to relational violence rather than domestic violence, statistics were available but were not disaggregated by sex. In 2015, nearly 280 people had contacted the Victim Assistance Bureau. Available services included a shelter, medical and psychological care and legal assistance.

27. **Mr. Kaptein** (Netherlands) said that shelter services were available for documented and undocumented migrants alike. Every asylum application went through a thorough assessment process, during which the applicant was eligible for accommodation. Where an asylum seeker was in need of protection, his or her application was granted, along with housing. However, where protection was not necessary, applications were denied — unless there were mental health concerns — and the persons concerned no longer had a legal right to remain in the Netherlands, although they were eligible for shelter prior to returning to their country of origin, provided that they made a genuine effort to arrange their departure. The Netherlands considered its practice in that regard to be in line with its human rights obligations.

28. **Mr. Abou** (Netherlands) said that the Government had no plans to reintroduce the provision of interpreters in the health-care system, preferring instead to invest in Dutch language courses for newcomers to the country.

29. Under the basic health insurance package, individuals were entitled to benefits where they had a medical need, including in the area of gender-affirmative health care. The National Health Care Institute had taken the lead in establishing quality standards and professional guidelines for gender-affirmative health care. Medical care could not be imposed without the explicit and informed consent of patients or their parents. The Health Care Inspectorate was mandated to enforce standards and had the power to close down health-care providers that committed serious breaches. The Netherlands supported the advancement of the rights of intersex persons and in November 2016 had held a meeting of experts with the aim of identifying the specific problems that intersex persons faced and the ways in which the Government could remedy them. A follow-up meeting was due to take place in 2017.

30. Patients had the right to lodge a complaint regarding health-care services under the Health-care Quality, Complaints and Disputes Act. Complaints must be dealt with within six weeks; when a complaint could not be settled between the patient and the health-care provider, an independent dispute settlement body could issue binding rulings and award damages of up to €25,000.

31. **Mr. Slaats** (Netherlands) said, in connection with the gas extraction operations in Groningen, that the safety and security of residents was paramount. The Government was taking measures to prevent the earthquakes caused by the operations, including reducing the permitted volume of gas extracted to less than half of the limit that had been in place in 2013. Programmes had been set up to mitigate the effects of the extractions and to compensate any residents affected by them.

32. **Mr. Sadi** invited the State party to consider the Committee's general comments, which clarified that, contrary to an assertion made by the delegation, the provisions of the Covenant should be applied by individuals as well as by the authorities.

33. **Mr. Uprimny** said that the lack of provision in domestic legislation for irregular migrants to receive support for their basic needs contravened international law. He urged the State party to apply the Limburg Principles on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

34. **Mr. De Schutter** said that he would be interested to hear about the practical obstacles facing homeless persons who wished to obtain benefits under the Work and Social Assistance Act. It was unclear how homeless persons could receive support from their municipality if they did not have a registered address.

35. **Ms. Shin** (Country Rapporteur) said that she wished to learn how — apart from the monitoring activities of the Labour Inspectorate — the authorities encouraged employers to comply with the legal provisions in place on equal pay, non-discrimination against pregnant women and the employment of persons with disabilities.

36. **Ms. Liebenberg** (Task Force Member) said that she wished to encourage the State party to improve its data collection in the areas of poverty and domestic violence, particularly in the Dutch Caribbean, in order to enable the Committee to better assess whether the situation had improved or worsened between periodic reports.

37. **Mr. Kaptein** (Netherlands) said that, while the Government recognized that the provisions of article 11 of the Covenant, which established the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, extended also to irregular migrants, it took the position that States parties were not prevented from requiring irregular migrants to cooperate in preparing for their return to their country of origin. If adult irregular migrants refused to make a genuine effort to leave the country, they themselves were responsible for the consequences. Individuals who were unable to engage in the process as a result of mental health issues were entitled to support from the dedicated mental health facility for migrants.

38. **Ms. Steijns** (Netherlands) said that homeless persons had the right to obtain a mailing address in order to enable them to obtain municipal services. Municipalities were obliged to accept applications for services from persons using a mailing address located within their jurisdiction. If an individual was not registered in a specific municipality, he or she was entitled to receive social assistance from one of the 43 central municipalities.

39. **Mr. Slaats** (Netherlands) said that the Labour Inspectorate had begun to introduce incentives to encourage compliance with the labour laws. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment had run advertising campaigns to combat exploitation in the labour market.

40. **Ms. Mulder** (Netherlands) said that ensuring the implementation of labour regulations was both a policy responsibility for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and a task for the Labour Inspectorate. Programmes to encourage good practice among employers included an annual company of the year award.

41. **Mr. Kerdoun** (Task Force Member) said that, while the education system in the State party ranked among the best in the world, social inequalities led to segregation along ethnic and cultural lines in many establishments. The Committee would be interested to hear how the Government intended to eliminate such segregation.

42. Large numbers of children with disabilities were educated in special schools rather than mainstream schools, with a further 15,000 not receiving any education at all. He wished to learn how the authorities would tackle the lack of flexibility in adapting schools to the needs of children with disabilities, including through the introduction of new legislation.

43. The Committee would appreciate the delegation's comments on the measures being taken to protect pregnant students and single mothers from discrimination in the education system.

44. Details would be welcome on the number of students who dropped out of education without obtaining a basic diploma. The Committee would be grateful for information on the extent to which the education system in Sint Maarten and Curaçao responded to the needs of the local population, particularly given that teaching took place in Dutch, which was not

the mother tongue of the majority of students. It was unclear whether in those places there were difficulties in recruiting teachers and in ensuring that the education provided was appropriate to the local job market. It would be useful to receive data on the proportion of the population in the Dutch Caribbean who had access to the Internet.

*The meeting was suspended at noon and resumed at 12.05 p.m.*

45. **Mr. Konings** (Netherlands) said that the Government took the view that high-quality education was a key factor in promoting social integration and reducing de facto segregation in schools. It had developed programmes to help preschool children improve their Dutch language skills before they entered the mainstream education system. Schools with large numbers of students from disadvantaged or ethnic minority backgrounds received additional funding in order to prevent children from falling behind or dropping out.

46. Parents of children with disabilities had the right to apply to the school of their choosing. If the school was unable to provide the support a child required, it had a duty of care to provide appropriate education, including through the provision of home schooling, in consultation with the child's parents. The Netherlands had recently ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was in the process of implementing its provisions.

47. Educational establishments had a responsibility to accommodate pregnant students and single mothers and received sufficient financial support to do so. A recent NGO-led study had revealed that some students in those groups encountered problems in continuing their education; consequently, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science was preparing a guidance manual to ensure that such students received the assistance that they required. In March 2017, the Government had presented its action plan to combat pregnancy discrimination, which included new measures aimed at the education sector.

48. Under the Appropriate Education Act of 2014, teaching programmes could be tailored to the individual requirements of students who were unable to attend full-time schooling as a result of behavioural issues or mental or physical health needs.

49. In the Caribbean Netherlands, targets for educational attainment were adjusted to suit the local context and vocational education programmes were tailored to the local labour market. In Sint Eustatius and Saba, primary education was offered in English and/or Dutch. Secondary education was offered in English only, but that policy was under review. Vocational education at levels 1 and 2 was offered in English and/or Dutch. In Bonaire, primary education was offered in Papiamento or Dutch. Secondary education was offered in Dutch, although teachers were permitted to use Papiamento in the classroom where necessary. Vocational education was offered in Papiamento and Dutch at levels 1 and 2, and solely in Dutch at levels 3 and 4.

50. **Ms. Croes** (Netherlands) said that, in Aruba, the education authorities had made great efforts to adapt the curriculum to the local context and to introduce more teaching materials in Papiamento. The island had its own teacher training institute and there was a sufficient number of teachers for the local population. Around 60 to 70 per cent of the population of Aruba had access to the Internet.

51. **Ms. Martis** (Netherlands) said that, in Curaçao, steps had been taken in recent years to move towards using Papiamento as the language of instruction in the education system. In 2016, one secondary school had completed the transition from Dutch to Papiamento in all subjects. The authorities were making efforts to produce new teaching materials that better reflected the local context; however, that process required considerable investment. Steps were being taken to develop digital resources as a less expensive way of introducing new material.

52. Efforts were being made to improve specialization in the education system, including in the higher education sector, in order to meet the needs of the local economy more effectively. Students often left the island to complete their university studies elsewhere and upon their return found that their skills did not match the requirements of the local labour market.

53. **Ms. Voges** (Netherlands) said that, in Sint Maarten, the languages of instruction were English and Dutch, while the majority of the local population spoke English at home. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science planned to design a new language policy based on the outcome of a recent study on the status of Dutch as a foreign language on the islands in the Dutch Caribbean. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education ensured that standards were maintained, while the National Institute of Professional Advancement provided regular opportunities for teachers to refresh their skills. The teacher-to-student ratio stood at 1:15 following the opening of a number of new schools. Emphasis was increasingly being placed on the use of technology in education and in 2015 a conference had been held to facilitate the exchange of ideas between educators and to share knowledge on how best to implement the use of software tools in the classroom.

54. **Mr. Konings** (Netherlands) said that, in Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba, 75 per cent of households had had access to the Internet in 2013.

55. The number of students dropping out of education without receiving a basic diploma, which had stood at 71,000 in 2002, had since decreased to 23,000, thanks to concerted efforts by the authorities.

56. **Mr. Kerdoun** (Task Force Member) said that the problem of segregation along racial lines persisted in the education system. He wished to learn how the Government planned to reassess access to education for child migrants and asylum seekers, particularly those in an irregular situation, in order to ensure that their right to an education was protected.

57. **Ms. Mulder** (Netherlands) said that the prohibition of the collection of data on a person's cultural or ethnic background for administrative purposes meant that it was not possible to identify the racial make-up of individual educational establishments. Schools tended to reflect the population of the area they served.

58. **Mr. Konings** (Netherlands) said that a plan of action had been rolled out in October 2016 to promote equal opportunities within the education system. The plan would be evaluated over a period of two years to determine which of its measures were the most effective. Asylum seekers were entitled to enrol in primary and secondary education while they were of compulsory school age. Asylum seekers who held residence permits enjoyed the same rights as Dutch nationals, including access to funding for university studies. The Foundation for Refugee Students supported highly skilled refugees in finding suitable employment in the Netherlands, while the Dutch Organization for Internationalization in Education had developed an online tool to provide information about higher education in the Netherlands to refugee students living there. Both of those organizations received funding from the Government.

59. **Ms. Shin**, thanking the delegation for its comments, said that the reorganization of the State party into four autonomous countries and three special municipalities had brought with it a number of challenges for the authorities. Disparities remained between the opportunities enjoyed by persons of Dutch and non-Dutch origin, men and women, and the European and Caribbean areas of the State party. She urged the Government to establish national human rights institutions in each of the four autonomous countries and to develop a national human rights action plan containing concrete goals and strategies, including improved human rights education in schools. Better collection of disaggregated data was required, particularly in the Dutch Caribbean, in order to enable the Committee to evaluate the progress made during reporting periods.

60. **Ms. Mulder** (Netherlands) said that the pursuit of the goal of ensuring economic, social and cultural rights for all was hampered by fast-moving changes in technology and society. The Government invited the Committee to share with it best practices from other States parties.

61. **The Chair** urged the State party to re-examine the Covenant and reconsider its position on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*